

I'm Known by How I've Grown, Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 3:3-4 – June 8th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, "I'm Known by How I've Grown."
- In it we're identifying specifically that which has the potential to stunt and even retard my spiritual growth even though I may be born again.
- By that I mean specific reasons as to why someone who may be a born again Christian may have never grown and matured as a Christian.

1. I'm unable to eat the meat of solid doctrine (Verses 1-2)

- Here Paul addresses them as worldly not spiritual though brothers in Christ who are as infants that are still not ready for solid food but milk.

2. I'm riddled with jealousy and conflict (Verses 3-4)

(3) You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (4) For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

- v3 He says they're still worldly as evidenced by jealousy and arguing. He then rhetorically asks, are you not worldly, acting like mere men?
- v4 Paul then puts his finger on what their carnal conflicts were about, namely, one says, "I follow Paul, and another says, "I follow Apollos."
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which instead of being moved by his fan club, he rebukes them for being carnal.

- Paul's unusual response begs the question of why it is that, instead of rebuking them; he's not thanking them for following him on Twitter.
- You'll forgive the humor but if we were honest with ourselves, it's very likely that the best of us would be unduly influenced by their flattery.
- So much so, we will split from the church we're in, take those who "follow us" so they'll "follow us" down the street to start another church.

I like how one commentator said it, "In addition to an inability to take in the meat of the Word, carnality manifests itself in envy, strife, and division. Envy always wants something else, which leads to strife—always finding something wrong, which leads to division—always looking for something new. This is what was happening in the church at Corinth as carnal believers fought with and split from one another."

- I suppose you could say these are the catastrophic consequences of carnality, such that they expose carnal Christians for what they are.
- More specifically, when a Christian is given over to envy and strife, which leads to division, they reveal how carnal and unspiritual they are.
- Sadly, it's the mixed multitudes out of Egypt, a type of the world, that are alive and well today, in every church whether it's small or large.

- Numbers 11 is an example of how the worldly mixed multitudes will cause conflict and striving, leading to division amongst God's people.

Numbers 11:4-6 NKJV Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? (5) We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; (6) but now our whole being is dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!"

- Here we're told that "the mixed multitude who were among them," were overcome by this intense craving for some meat to eat like in Egypt.
- By the way, let me parenthetically say; our word carnal comes from the root word meaning "flesh," i.e. "Chili Con Carne," Chili with meat.)
- Be that as it may, the mixed multitude, we're tired of the same old Manna every day as if to say let's spice things up a little with some flesh.

Charles Spurgeon - "The mischief in the camp usually commenced with the mixed multitude, and it is the same with the church of God now: the merely nominal Christians in her are the tinder for Satan's sparks. It is sad, however, to note that the Israelites were ready enough to follow the bad example of the mixed company. They murmured wantonly. They did not want for either bread or water, but pined for luxuries, such complaining is sure to be punished."

Damian Kyle - "Like with the mixed multitude, carnal Christians can't make the world like the church, so they will try to make the church like the world so that they can feel more comfortable in it. The mixed multitude didn't have another church that they could go to in the wilderness to be more comfortable, so they had to spread this discontentment and discord amongst the congregation of Israelites."

Numbers 11:31-35 NKJV Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left *them* fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. (32) And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. (33) But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. (34) So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving. (35) From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.

- This is as explicit as it is graphic in its detail. For me, it's too much information, however the Lord wants this burned into their memories.
- True to form the place is named according to the nature of what happened at that place; in that Kibroth Hattaavah means graves of craving.
- I find it interesting that we see this mentioned in the Psalms where we read about it yet again, and as such, we're given additional details.

Psalms 78:27-31 NKJV He also rained meat on them like the dust, Feathered fowl like the sand of the seas; (28) And He let *them* fall in the midst of their camp, All around their dwellings. (29) So they ate and were well filled, For He gave them their own desire. (30) They were not deprived of their craving; But while their food *was* still in their mouths, (31) The wrath of God came against them, And slew the stoutest of them, And struck down the choice *men* of Israel.

Psalms 106:13-15 NKJV They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, (14) But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert. (15) And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.

- In closing, might I suggest that leanness in ones soul is one of the many catastrophic consequences of carnality in the life of a Christian?
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that this leanness of soul comes vis-à-vis God giving us over to our intense cravings for carnal things.
- Would to God, that we would be numbered amongst those so fully satisfied with spiritual Manna we no longer crave the lusts of the flesh.